

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2770

EXDIS

FOR ATHERTON FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS ABOUT THE TRANSITION QUARTER AID

1. AS THE TIME HAS STRETCHED OUT FOR THE FINAL CONGRESSIONAL DECISION ON THE QUESTION OF THE EXTRA \$550 MILLION FOR ISRAEL, A NUMBER OF REPORTS AND INNUENDOS HAVE APPEARED HERE WHICH I BELIEVE MAY REQUIRE SOME RESPONSE FROM OUR SIDE. PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT (AND POTENTIALLY DAMAGING) WAS AN ARTICLE BY YOEL MARCUS IN HAARETZ APRIL 18 WHICH SAYS THAT WHILE I HAVE NOT BEEN GIVEN EXPLICIT INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE DEPARTMENT I HAVE AT LEAST BEEN GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT TO THROW MY WEIGHT ABOUT IN ISRAEL: "TOON FAITHFULLY REFLECTS THE INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS OF THE FORD ADMINISTRATION." MARCUS GOES ON TO SAY: "...ON FACTS, ONLY ONE SIDE CAN BE RIGHT, AND THAT AUTOMATICALLY MAKES THE OTHER SIDE A LIAR." HE THEN BERATES ME FOR SAYING "VERY INSISTENTLY" THAT THE ADMINISTRATION'S OBJECTIONS TO FIFTH QUARTER AID WERE KNOWN TO ISRAEL IN ADVANCE AND THAT THE PRESIDENT'S ACTIVITIES WERE CONSISTENT WITH HIS POSITION FROM THE BEGINNING AND SHOULD NOT HAVE CAUSED SURPRISE. (MY PRINCIPAL EMPHASIS, IN THIS AS WELL AS OTHER RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS, HAS BEEN ON THE PRESIDENT'S DEDICATION TO BUDGETARY RESTRAINT AND FISCAL DISCIPLINE - WHICH HAS BEEN A HALLMARK OF THE PRESIDENT'S STAND ON ACROSS-THE-BOARD EXPENDITURES FROM THE VERY BEGINNING.) MARCUS CONTINUES: "NOW THAT IS VERY SURPRISING

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INDEED, FOR ACCORDING TO WHAT THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

SAYS, FORD NEVER TOLD HIM THAT HE WOULD FIGHT APPROVAL OF THE ALLOCATIONS, AND IF FORD'S STRONG OBJECTIONS WERE KNOWN IN ADVANCE, AS TOON CLAIMS, THEY WERE CONCEALED FROM HIM (I.E., THE PRIME MINISTER) NOT ONLY BY FORD BUT ALSO BY KISSINGER. ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S VERSION, IT WAS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF A COMPLETE SURPRISE, BUT OF A BREACH OF AGREEMENT."

2. HE CONCLUDES: "...WE HAVE TWO CONTRADICTORY VERSIONS: THAT OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THAT OF THE PRIME MINISTER. OBVIOUSLY SOMEONE IS NOT TELLING THE TRUTH...I AM WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR AN OFFICIAL UNEQUIVOCAL ISRAELI DENIAL OF THE VERSION PRODUCED BY THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR."

3. MARCUS DID NOT HAVE LONG TO WAIT FOR THIS DENIAL, WHICH WAS GIVEN BY AMOS EIRAN AND APPEARED IN HAARETZ APRIL 19. EIRAN MAINTAINS THAT THE SECRETARY TOLD RABIN EXPLICITLY THAT IF CONGRESS SHOULD INITIATE LEGISLATION (I.E., FOR THE FIFTH QUARTER AID) THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD NOT OPPOSE IT AND THAT, ON ISRAEL'S REQUEST, THIS STATEMENT WAS COMMUNICATED TO A NUMBER OF SENATORS. HE ADDS THAT ON MARCH 8 MCCLOSKEY WROTE THE CHAIRMAN OF THE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE STATING THAT IF CONGRESS SHOULD APPROVE A FURTHER ALLOCATION FOR THE TRANSITION PERIOD, "WE SHALL NOT OPPOSE IT, AS LONG AS THE SUPPLEMENTARY MONEY IS DISTRIBUTED IN EQUAL SHARES TO THE OTHER COUNTRIES ENTITLED TO IT." EIRAN CONCLUDES THAT THE PRESIDENT REPEATED THIS POSITION ON MARCH 15 AT A MEETING WITH A DELEGATION OF JEWISH LEADERS. PRESUMABLY EIRAN NOTES, "THE PRESIDENT HAD CHANGED HIS MIND AFTER THAT DATE."

4. COMMENT: I AM GETTING A BIT FED UP WITH THIS SORT OF SNIPING AND QUESTIONING OF NOT ONLY OUR MOTIVES BUT ALSO OUR WORD. THE ISRAELIS KNEW AS EARLY AS JANUARY 23, WHEN IN MY ABSENCE DUNNIGAN MET WITH RABINOWITZ, THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS NOT PROPOSING ANY FIFTH QUARTER AID (TEL AVVIV 0612). THEY HAVE SYSTEMATICALLY MOUNTED A CAMPAIGN FOR THAT AID, AND I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE THAT THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION MAY BE ONE OF THE FIRST CASUALTIES OF THAT CAMPAIGN. I HAVE SEEN THE SECRETARY'S APRIL 14 REMARKS ON THE HILL BUT CONFIDENTIAL

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I STILL THINK THAT IT NOW MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE TO FIND OCCASION FOR A MORE FORMAL STATEMENT OUT OF WASHINGTON SETTING FORTH THE FACTS. I WILL GRANT THAT THERE MAY BE A GENERAL MISUNDERSTANDING HERE BUT I ALSO SUSPECT THAT THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT.
TOON

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